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MIS, DIS, MALINFORMATION

CISA's Mis-, Dis-, and Malinformation (MDM) team is charged with building national resilience to MDM and foreign influence activities. Through these efforts, CISA helps the American people understand the scope and scale of MDM activities targeting elections and critical infrastructure, and enables them to take actions to mitigate associated risks. The MDM team was formerly known as the Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CFITF).

ANNOUNCEMENT

October 18, 2022: CISA released the Tactics of Disinformation Series, available in English and Spanish, to provide state, local, tribal, and territorial government officials and private sector partners insight into eight common tactics used by disinformation actors to spread false narratives as well as proactive measures that can help mitigate the effectiveness of each tactic.

- Download/share the Tactics of Disinformation Series (English-version)
- Download/share the Tactics of Disinformation Series (Spanish-version)

Collapse All Sections

MDM Overview

In May of 2018, a Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CFITF) was established within CISA's predecessor agency. The CFITF was charged with helping the American people understand the risks from MDM and how citizens can play a role in reducing the impact of MDM on their organizations and communities. In 2021, the CFITF officially transitioned into CISA's MDM team, and the mission evolved to reflect the changing information environment. The MDM team continues to work in close coordination with interagency and private sector partners, social media companies, academia, and international partners on a variety of projects to build resilience against malicious information activities.

MDM Guiding Principles

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The MDM team's guiding principle is the protection of privacy, free speech, and civil liberties. To that end, the MDM team closely consults with the DHS Privacy Office and DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties on all activities.

The MDM team is also committed to collaboration with partners and stakeholders. In addition to civil society groups, researchers, and state and local government officials, the MDM team works in close collaboration with the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other agencies across the federal government. Federal Agencies respective roles in recognizing, understanding, and helping manage the threat and dangers of MDM and foreign influence on the American people are mutually supportive, and it is essential that we remain coordinated and cohesive when we engage stakeholders.

What is MDM?

Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation make up what CISA defines as "information activities". When this type of content is released by foreign actors, it can be referred to as foreign influence. Definitions for each are below.

- **Misinformation** is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.

- **Disinformation** is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.

- **Malinformation** is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.

Foreign and domestic threat actors use MDM campaigns to cause chaos, confusion, and division. These malign actors are seeking to interfere with and undermine our democratic institutions and national cohesiveness. The **resources** provided at the bottom of this page provide examples and more information about MDM activities.

Building Resilience

The MDM team's plan for building national resilience through public awareness and engagement is focused on engaging three categories of stakeholders to enable a whole-of-society approach:

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) – The MDM team engages SMEs to enhance our understanding of the threat and how to mitigate the impact of information activities, to include how best to message to the public. SMEs include researchers, think tanks, and marketing/advertising experts.

- Trusted Voices – The federal government cannot solve the MDM problem on its own. We need both trusted voices and those who can amplify resilience messaging. Trusted voices include state and local government officials, community leaders, and associations. The engagement with trusted voices helps the MDM team reach communities targeted by previous MDM campaigns.

- American Public – In addition to working with Trusted Voices, the MDM team develops informational products and tools for use by the American people. Each of us has the power to stop information activities. The MDM team is focused on helping all Americans understand how bad actors are targeting them and what they can do to ensure those actors are not successful.

Bridging Election Stakeholders and Social Media

The MDM team serves as a switchboard for routing disinformation concerns to appropriate social media platforms and law enforcement. This activity began in 2018, supporting state and local election officials to mitigate disinformation about the time, place, and manner of voting. For the 2020 election, CISA expanded the breadth of reporting to include other state and local officials and more social media platforms. This activity leverages the rapport the MDM team has with the social media platforms to enable shared situational awareness.

COVID-19 Response

As COVID-19 spread around the globe, mis-, dis-, and malinformation (MDM) spread as well. COVID-19-related MDM activities seek to undermine public confidence and sow confusion. COVID-19 has demonstrated that a rapidly evolving event creates opportunities for adversaries to act maliciously. It also shows that rapid evolution of accurate information makes older, dated information a potential catalyst of confusion and distrust as well. The MDM team supports the interagency and private sector partners' COVID-19 response efforts via regular reporting and analysis of key pandemic-related MDM trends.

MDM Resources

- CISA Insights: Preparing for and Mitigating Foreign Influence Operations Targeting Critical Infrastructure
- CISA Insights: COVID-19 Disinformation Activity
- COVID-19 Disinformation Toolkit
- Disinformation Stops With You Infographic Set (also available in Spanish)
- Election Disinformation Toolkit
- Foreign Interference Taxonomy (also available in Spanish)
- Information Manipulation Infographic (also available in Spanish)
- MDM Planning and Incident Response Guide for Election Officials
- Resilience Series: Bug Bytes Graphic Novel
- Resilience Series: Real Fake Graphic Novel
- Rumor Control Page Start-Up Guide
- Social Media Bots Infographic Set (also available in Spanish)
- Tactics of Disinformation Series (also available in Spanish)
- Tools of Disinformation: Inauthentic Content (also available in Spanish)
- War on Pineapple: Understanding Foreign Interference in 5 Steps (also available in Spanish)

For MDM-related resources, visit the MDM Resource Library.

For additional information on the MDM team's work, please email CFITF@cisa.dhs.gov.